

CARSTEN HÖLLER

DOUBLE

Massimo De Carlo gallery is pleased to present Double by Carsten Höller. This is the first show by the Belgian-born German artist in Hong Kong.

Renowned for his audience-engaging and inquisitive practice, Carsten Höller, who has begun his professional life as a scientist in agricultural entomology, creates visually striking, often large-scale installations that produce unique experiences in the viewer/user.

In the exhibition Double, the artist presents a series of recent works dealing with the notion of doubling, and doubling the doubled. The double is a recurring theme in the work of the artist, and is epitomized by the acrylic glass sculpture Yellow/Orange Double Sphere¹, a suspended luminous device composed of two coloured spheres. The work is part of the series Vehicles by Höller, created from 1998 onwards. He suggests using this particular vehicle on a downhill slope, where a person can travel standing inside the inner sphere whilst the outer sphere spins around it when rolling down the hill. The dimensions of Yellow/Orange Double Sphere are designed to accommodate one person standing with spread legs and arms, like Leonardo da Vinci's Vitruvian Man.

The notion of duplication is also present in the work Giant Triple Mushroom², an enlarged replica of three different types of mushrooms, including Amanita muscaria (also known as fly agaric), a highly poisonous type of fungus with psychoactive properties. The work is part of a series of mushroom sculptures that the artist started making in the early 2000s. Questioned about his interests in mushrooms, Höller has said: "the fruiting bodies of fungi, which we call mushrooms, come in a large variety of shapes, colours, and ingredients - but this variety doesn't make sense as they don't communicate and don't want to attract animals in order to spread their spores, as far as we know. There is something going on there that we don't understand. The fly agaric, in it's splendid colourful display and it's toxicity, is an especially striking example of this enigmatic uselessness."

The artists continues to apply the doubling method in Double Mushroom Vitrine (Twice) a glass vitrine that contains life-sized casts of wild mushrooms: half a fly agaric is mounted to half a fruiting body of another mushroom of similar height. The vitrine contains two of these half/half mushroom replicas.

Grey Dots on Ivory-white Background is part of Carsten Höller's new series of paintings based on the principle of division. The dots are applied at the exact location where a division would take place if the surface of the painting would be divided in half, and half of it in half again, and so on.

¹ The work was exhibited at Carsten Höller solo show Doubt at Pirelli Hangar Bicocca in Milan, curated by Vicente Todolí, 7 April – 31 July 2016 (catalogue). And at the exhibition Y at the Fundación Botín in Sant Ander, curated by Udo Kittelman and Vicente Todolí, June – September 2017.

² The work was exhibited at Carsten Höller solo show Carsten Höller: Henie Onstad Sanatorium at Henie Onstad Kunstsenter, in Oslo, 12 May – 10 September 2017 (catalogue).

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In Golden Tench and Surface a taxidermied goldfish is mounted in front of a painted glass surface. As in the painting, the surface of the glass is divided in half and divided in half again and again and again and again. Höller has said earlier that this simple division principle "is a way to reach infinity". The surface is divided into seven units, with its yellow colour being diluted by 50% white at each division step.

All the works in the exhibition explore the double, both as a mathematical method intended to reach infinity and as a proposition to doubt the perceived entirety of the elements of this world, which includes our "entire, not-doubled" way of looking at them.

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Carsten Höller was born 1961 in Brussels, Belgium to German parents. He works and resides in Stockholm, Sweden and Biriwa, Ghana. Recent solo exhibitions include: Henie Onstad Sanatorium, (2017); Video Retrospective with Two Lightmachines, Mu.Zee, Ostend, Belgium (2016); Doubt, Pirelli HangarBicocca, Milan, Italy (2016); Decision, Hayward Gallery, London, England (2015); Golden Mirror Carousel, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia (2014); Leben, Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary, Vienna, Austria (2014); Experience, New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, NY (2011); Test Site, Turbine Hall Tate Modern, (2006). Carsten Höller has participated in several Venice Biennials (1993, 2009, 2015) and at Documenta X in 1997.

Hard Facts:

Massimo De Carlo, Hong Kong

3d Floor Pedder Building, 12 Pedder Street, Central, Hong Kong

From November 4th 2017 to 6th January 2018

Open Monday to Saturday, 10:30am – 7.00pm

Opening: Friday 3rd November 2017

For further information and materials:

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